Smuggling of chemical for making Heroin

3113. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Opium to heroin *via* India.....Indian Chemical Afghan druglords can't do withou" appearing in the Times of India dated the 8th April, 2001 pointing out smuggling of a vital chemical needed to convert opium into heroin out of India and sold in Pakistan and Afghanistan;

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the steps taken to check the reported smuggling activity?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Drug smuggling is a clandestine activity. While there have been seizures of Acetic Anhydride of Indian origin in India as well as abroad, there is nothing to indicate that it is "systematically being smuggled out of the country and sold to drug lords in Pakistan and Afghanistan".

(c) All cases of smuggling of Acetic Anhydride are actively investigated and action taken under the NDPS Act. Government has imposed stringent controls on Acetic Anhydride to check its smuggling and misue. Some of the steps taken in this regard are (i) declaring Acetic Anhydride as a 'Controlled Substance' under the NDPS Act which implies that all manufacturers, traders, importers, exporters and consumers of the chemical are required to maintain records and file returns with Narcotics Control Bureau as per the NDPS (Regulation of Controlled Substances) Order, 1993 and violation of the provision attracts imprisonment of up to ten years and fine; (ii) requirement of a No objection certificate from the narcotics Commissioner for the export/import of Acetic Anhydride out of India; (iii) Special checks on the movement of Acetic Anhydride under the Customs Act along the border with Myanmar and Pakistan; and (iv) the Indian enforcement agencies, Narcotics

Control Bureau (NCB) and Central Bureau of Narcotics (CBN) coordinate with other competent national authorities empowered to regulate or enforce national controls over Acetic Anhydride in accordance with UN Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs And Psychotropic Substances of 1988.

Advise to Banks/Cooperative Societies for non-recovery of loans

3114. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that handloom and powerloom workers in Andhra Pradesh committed suicides in recent past due to their inability to repay their loans to Banks/cooperative societies etc;

(b) if so, whether Government have advised or propose to advise Banks not to recover the loans for a certain period from the affected weavers to enable them to make up their losses; and

(c) if not, in what manner Government propose to help the weavers from financial crisis in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) As informed by the convenor of State Level Banker's Committee (Andhra Bank) for the State of Andhra Pradesh, there were no suicides of Handloom and power loom workers in Andhra Pradesh in the recent past due to their inability to pay their loans with Banks.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) With a view to help the weavers from financial crisis in Andhra Pradesh, Government proposed to finance the weavers under upgradation of powerloom and Jukki machines and identification of candidates under special Prime Minister's Rojgar Yojana Scheme. In addition to the reguiar Annual Credit Plan, the State Level Bankers' Committee proposed a special Banking Plan of Rs. 55 crores exclusively for handloom weavers for the year 2001-2002.